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PASTORAL LETTER

OF

His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec

ANNOUNCING HIS APPROACHING JOURNEY TO ROME, IN ORDER TO ASSIST AT THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL.

Quebec, 29th September 1869.

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ANNOUNCING HIS APPROACHING JOURNEY TO ROME, IN ORDER TO ASSIST AT THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL.

CHARLES FRANCOIS BAILLARGEON,

By the Mercy of God and the Favor of the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Quebec, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, &c,, &c., &c.

To the Clergy Secular and Regular, to the Religious Communities, and to all the faithful of our Archdiocese, Greeting and Benediction in Our Lord.

You know, Dearly Beloved Brethren, that the voice of the Holy Father calls us, together with all the Bishops of the world, to the Œcumenical Council which is to open at Rome, on the eighth of December next, the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of our God.

The call of the Head of the Church is for us a command. As a child of the Church, and still more as a Bishop, we owe Him obedience; this obedience we have sworn to give Him on the day of our consecration. His command is for us the command of the Vicar of Jesus-Christ: we accordingly receive it as coming to us from Jesus-Christ Himself.

We shall therefore obey with joy. Yes, in spite of our advanced age and the weakness of our health, it is with a holy joy that we shall set out for the eternal city; happy to have it in our power to answer this call of the successor of Peter; happy to be enabled to contemplate once more that majesty so gran

and so calm amidst the tempests which torment the Church, that majesty so gentle and so holy of Pius IX, that man of the right hand of God, that Angel of the earth, and to offer to him your and our homage : the homage of our filial piety, of our profound respect, of our love and of our perfect devotedness, happy to be present, in company with all our brothers of this province, at that august assembly of all the princes of God's people ; happy in fine to press with them, in those great Assizes of the Church of God, round Her Visible Head, in order to fight with Him and under his orders the fight of the Lord : the fight against the spirit of error ; the fight against the spirit of evil and of untruthfulness ; and to proclaim and to cause to triumph at last the eternal truth which alone can save the world.

For such is the objet of this great Council, and that is the end which the Sovereign Pontiff has proposed to himself in convoking it.

To procure the greatest glory of God, the honor of his worship, the integrity of the faith, the eternal salvation of men, the holiness of discipline in the clergy, the purity of morals among the faithful, a christian education to youth, the instruction of nations, to remove every evil from the Church and from society, to put down vice, to repel error, to bring back strayed men to the path of truth and of justice, to enlighten and to save the world : that is what the council has in view : that is its great object : that is the work which it proposes to itself, and on which it is about to deliberate.

You see therefore, D. B. B., that this work of the Council is the work itself of God ; the work of the Son of God in the world :—the work of the salvation of the world which He has confided to His Church, yes, that is what the Œcumenical Council is about to effect ; that is the holy work which it seeks to accomplish with the all-powerful assistance of the Saviour of the world who will preside over it as supreme head of the Church, and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who will enlighten it. For He has promised to His apostles and to their successors " to be with them all days, even to the consummation of the world, " to be in the midst of them where they shall be gathered together in His name, " and to send them His Holy Spirit to teach them all truth, " and to suggest to them all they must do for the salvation of men.

Therefore, in this Council, as in all the general councils which have preceded it in the Church of God, every thing will be done under the presidency and influence of Jesus Christ, and under the inspiration of His Divine Spirit. Jesus-Christ will Himself labour with the Bishops and direct them ; and the Holy Ghost will enlighten them. They will be enabled to say, with confidence, like

the Apostles in their council of Jerusalem, " it hath seemed good to the Holy " Ghost and to us " : He has judged with us, and we have judged with Him. Their sentences will be the sentences of Jesus Christ, their decrees, the decrees of Jesus-Christ: their definitions will be the definitions of the Holy Ghost, their judgments the judgments of the Holy Ghost.

All the definitions and all the jugdments of this Council will therefore be infallible; all its sentences and all its decrees without appeal. That which it will have approved and decreed shall be approved and sanctioned by God Himself: that which it will have condemned and reproved shall be likewise condemned and reproved by God. That which it will have loosed upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven; and that which it will have bound here below, shall be bound also in heaven. Its judgments, its definitions and its decrees will apply to all men, and will oblige them all. For all are subject to the sovereign authority of God and of his divine Son Jesus-Christ Our Saviour: and those decrees Jesus-Christ will have enacted conjointly with the Fathers of the Council: and those judgments and those definitions the Holy Ghost will have pronounced by their lips. He who hears them will hear Jesus-Christ: he who hearkens to them will hearken to Jesus Christ: he who rejects them will therefore reject Jesus Christ: he who despises them will therefore despise Jesus Christ, and God the Father who has sent him into this world, and the Holy Ghost who is one and the same God with the Father and the Son, and by whose inspiration all will have been regulated, judged and defined in the Council.

Happy therefore, happy all those who shall lend an attentive and a docile ear to the teachings of this great Council; who shall receive them with faith, and observe them with fidelity! They will find therein truth, justice and eternal life. Happy the nations who shall listen to, and embrace, them: they will see the light, they will be enlightened, they will know what can heal and save them, they will adhere to them, and live. But wo to the men, wo to the nations who shall refuse to listen and to submit to them: they shall dwell in the darkness of death and they shall perish.

As for you, D. B. B., rejoice at seeing the moment at hand when the Council will begin its labors. Christians, Children of the Church, bless the Lord of Mercy for that He vouchsafes to be Himself your preceptor, and to teach you all truth by the lips of his ministers, whom he has given you as pastors. What happiness! *Beatus quem tu erudieris, Domine, et de lege tua docueris eum.* " Yes, Lord, blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct: and shalt teach him

" out of thy law." And this happiness you have found, it has been given to you, in the Catholic Church, in the Church of God, which you call your mother. Love her therefore, that holy mother; cling to her from your very entrails; do not cease to thank the Lord for having granted you the grace to be amongst her children; be always docile to her voice: her voice is the voice of God. That voice she is about to raise in her approaching Council, to speak to you in the name of God: and by that voice of his Church God himself will speak to you and will reveal to you his divine teachings and the precepts of his holy law. Lend an attentive ear that you may hear them; prepare your minds and your hearts to receive them with love; and pray, redouble your prayers for the Fathers of the Council: conjure the Lord to give an all powerful virtue to their words, " that they may be heard unto the utmost parts of the earth," that they may awaken all men and all nations; that they may enlighten all minds; that they may penetrate all hearts, and make them all enter into the paths of truth, justice and salvation.

It is with this holy thought that the Sovereign Pontiff has convoked the Œcumenical Council. Such is the wish of his great soul: it is the prayer of all the children of the Church, of all the just of the earth; it is the most ardent of our prayers; let it be therefore also the most fervent of yours.

This unanimous concert of prayer of all the saints which constantly ascends from all parts of the earth, to the throne of God, is just what consoles the heart of the Holy Father, what fills him with the hope of obtaining all the good he expects from his Council, and to see at last what he does not cease to ask of God day and night: the end of the evils which he endures, for the cause of truth, and the triumph of the Church. He has heard and he has meditated those words of the Saviour of the world: " Think you that God will not revenge his " elect who cry to him day and night? and will he have patience in their regard? " I say to you that he will quickly revenge them." And it is written: " The " Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him: and shall " deliver them." " The eyes of the Lord are upon the just: and his ears unto " their prayers."

Thus it is that all the faithful of the world are enabled to participate in the work of the Council and in the triumph of the Church, every one according to his vocation: you by your prayers, and we, by our presence and our labors in that holy assembly. What happiness for all! What consolation for you to have there your deputy, and to be present there, in some manner, in the person of your old Archbishop, and what glory, and what joy for us to appear there as the representative of the Church of Quebec, and work there in her name. It shall

therefore be, with sentiments of a holy joy and of a very sweet confidence in God, that we shall embark for Rome on the twenty third of the next month, as we have resolved to do.

We shall find it hard, no doubt, and much so, to separate from you for a length of time of which we are still ignorant : but we hope that that time will be short ; and during this absence we shall always remain united with you in mind and heart : united in prayer, united in Our Lord. You shall always be present to our memory ; we shall bear you every where in our heart, we shall not cease to pray for you : we shall do so every day at the altar in the holy sacrifice of the mass, and especially when it shall be given to us to celebrate at the tomb of the holy Apostles, and in those other venerated sanctuaries of that metropolis of the christian world, sanctified by the blood of so many martyrs....and if it should not be given to us to see you again in this world ; if it should please the Lord to call us to Him during our stay in the holy city, rely upon it that after having recommended our soul to God, and received the blessing of the Holy Father, our last prayer shall be for you : yes, for you : to beseech the God of all consolation to have you in his holy keeping, and to give you a pastor according to his heart. Thus we shall remain always united with you, have always but one heart and one soul, with you, in life and in death.

We have already said that it is to fulfil a great duty of our sublime vocation :—for God, for his Church, and for you in particular, that we go to the Œcumenical Council. Ah ! what can those have to fear who do the will of God, and " who confide in him ".... Does not the Holy Ghost Himself assure us that such abide under the protection of the Most-High ?....It is accordingly in full confidence that we shall undertake this great journey : relying on the holy keeping of God's grace, on the protection of Mary, on the protection of St. Joseph, Patron saint of this country, and on the protection of the holy Guardian Angels of this Church : protection which we implore with all the fervor of our soul, and which your prayers will help us to obtain.

Thus placing you, together with ourself, under the keeping of God and under the protection of his angels and of his saints, which we implore as much for you as for us, we shall set out without fear and without anxiety. And what completely removes from us all anxiety concerning you, is that we leave you under the guidance of an administrator competent to replace us worthily in all things. This administrator it will be sufficient to name, in order to fill you with the greatest confidence in him ; it is our most worthy Grand Vicar Mr. Charles Félix Cazeau, whose long experience in the spiritual and temporal affairs of this archdiocese, whose high capacity, sincere piety, zeal and devotedness to your

interests are known to all, and are so fully appreciated by every one of you. It is to him therefore that we confide the administration of the archdiocese during our absence, having conferred on him, to that end, with our authority, all our ordinary and extraordinary powers, and ordaining that all obey him as they would ourself.

But in order to secure more and more, for you and for us, the help of God, and the intercession of his saints, we need to pray, and to pray fervently. You will therefore pray with us, in the first place for the archdiocese: that we recommend to you before all else. Pray, oh! pray also for us; we conjure you to do so, in the name of that charity which unites us in Jesus-Christ: and thereon we rely in the fullest confidence.

Wherefore, having invoked the holy name of God, we have ordained and do ordain, decreed and do decree as follows:

1° From the day of our departure until the day of our return, all the priests of the archdiocese will add to their daily mass, after the prayers already commanded for the Council and for the Pope, the prayer of the holy angels, *Deus qui mi·o ordine*, &c., to be found in the votive mass "*de Angelis;*"

2° Every Sunday, after having said the Lord's prayer prescribed for the Council, they will repeat it a second time with the faithful, specially in our behalf.

Shall this our present pastoral letter be read, and published, at the prone of all parochial churches or chapels, and others where public service is performed, and, in chapter, in all religious communities, on the first day after its reception.

Given at the Archbishop's Palace, Quebec, under our signature, the seal of our arms and the countersign of our secretary, on the twenty ninth of September, the day of the Feast of the Archangel St. Michael and of the Holy Angels, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine.

✠ C. F. ARCHBISHOP OF QUEBEC.

By order of His Grace,

C. Baillargeon, Pr.

Secretary.